



Centers for Disease Control
and Prevention (CDC)
Atlanta GA 30333

April 6, 2004

Dear Colleague:

Last week you received a letter updating you on some very important strategic planning work underway by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Today, I'm writing to share some additional details about our work and to encourage you to participate in shaping CDC's future.

Since 2003, CDC has been developing a new strategic direction to enable us to better meet the challenges of public health in the 21st century. By modernizing our strategy, CDC can enhance its overall impact on public health. At the same time, CDC remains committed to scientific excellence, applied research, and rapid and appropriate response to the health needs of our customers and partners. Many of our partners have already contributed to this work by providing valuable input through discussion and interviews.

After compiling input from partners, employees, stakeholders, and the public, we have identified the following strategic imperatives:

- **CDC will align its priorities and investments to achieve two overarching health protection goals:** 1) *PREPAREDNESS: All communities will be protected from emerging infectious, environmental, and terrorist threats, and* 2) *HEALTH PROMOTION & PREVENTION OF DISEASE, INJURY AND DISABILITY: People will achieve their optimal lifespan with the best possible quality of health in every stage of life.* CDC's work will be directed by specific preparedness goals and life-stage specific health promotion goals that will cascade throughout the entire organization and encompass health impact, research, and management targets. CDC will be results-oriented and performance-based and will develop key indicators to measure progress toward achieving its health impact, research, and management goals.
- **CDC will be a customer-centric organization.** CDC's primary customers are the people whose health we are trying to protect. Agency goals, programs, decision support tools, and other products and services will address customers' health interests and needs, and must be packaged, marketed, and disseminated in ways that maximize their health protection impact, either directly or through appropriate partners and channels, including public health agencies, the healthcare delivery system, educational institutions, businesses, faith-based organizations, and other non-governmental organizations.

- **Science must remain as the foundation upon which all CDC programs, policies, and practices are based.** CDC's intramural and extramural public health/health protection research agenda should be expanded and integrated with the National Institutes of Health research agendas and those of other Department of Health and Human Services operating divisions to address the gaps in knowledge that must be filled to achieve the agency's health protection goals.
- **CDC must assume greater leadership in strengthening the health impact of the state and local governmental public health system.**
- **CDC must establish clear priorities for its global programs and increase its global connectivity to ensure rapid detection and response to emerging health threats.**
- **CDC must modernize its management and business practices to become more efficient, effective, and accountable.** The organizational "silos" that impede internal and external communication, synergy, and effectiveness must be minimized.

To support our new direction and our identified strategic imperatives, we have assembled a team of CDC professionals to determine appropriate Health Protection goals. In addition, we have also created a team to review our existing organizational structure and make recommendations for possible changes to our structure that will best support our new strategic direction.

On April 1, we shared the work completed by these teams and their respective recommendations with CDC employees. Today I want to share the same information with you and solicit your reactions. Your insights are important to us as we move forward and make final decisions about how we structure ourselves to achieve these goals and face future challenges.

In this packet, I've included some materials to help you understand what we are trying to achieve:

- Fact sheet: Outlines CDC's Futures Initiative (CDC's strategic planning and implementation process).
- Executive Summary of Report on Functional Design Prototypes: Highlight key elements of each design option as well as respective strengths and weaknesses.
- Q & A: Answers to some of the questions we anticipate our partners may have about CDC's strategic planning and implementation process.

As you review these materials and think about your feedback, please consider the following questions:

Regarding the proposed goals:

- Do these goals include the highest priorities for public health in the 21st century?
 - If not, what's missing?
- Are these goals consistent with CDC's mission as you understand it?
 - If not, why not?
- Which of the proposed CDC goals is your organization most closely aligned with?
- In what ways might the proposed goals change (pro or con) your organization's relationship with CDC?

Regarding the Functional Design Prototypes:

- Which prototypes would have the most impact (pro or con) on the ways your organization collaborates with CDC?
- Which prototype would have the most impact (pro or con) on your ability to acquire and use information from CDC that is critical to your work?

I encourage you to share your input regarding the new Health Protection Goals and the Functional Design prototypes directly with me. Please send your comments to the CDC e-mail address at futuresgroup@cdc.gov with "Partner comments" in the subject line. If you have questions, please write to Amanda Tarkington at ATarkington@cdc.gov.

I recognize that these are complex materials, and I am happy to review any of it with you personally during a satellite broadcast that we have scheduled for 2:30-4:00 PM on April 12, 2004. You will receive notification soon on how to call in.

On April 19, 2004, we will make some preliminary decisions on designs and goals. Your input before this date would be greatly appreciated. However, we will continue to need and use your input after that date as we refine and implement goals and make organizational decisions.

If you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact me personally.

Sincerely,


Julie Louise Gerberding, M.D., M.P.H.
Director

Enclosures